

One of the most touching sights I saw

Mr. Reese continued,

... in the Middle East was a poor man, a Muslim, in shabby clothes, kneeling on a newspaper, the only prayer rug he could afford, on the tarmac of the airport in Amman, Jordan, and saying his evening prayers. His example of simple faith in his God touched my heart.

Truthfully, I cannot conceive how any decent human being could say that such a sight is offensive. People who find other people's religion offensive are demonstrating their hatred, not their interest in liberty.

The only way a free society can work is for everyone to respect everyone else. There is no respect when someone says, 'Your religion is offensive to me, so keep it out of my sight.' That is hate speech. Nor is it being disrespectful to practice your own religion or to pray as your particular religion teaches you to pray.

Mr. Reese said,

I don't know about you, but I've had a bel-lyful of rude, self-centered people. It's time to teach some people in this country some simple manners.

Good manners are based on reciprocity. Respect for respect. Tolerance for tolerance. There are some people who use Orwellian doublespeak and practice bigotry while proclaiming their support for tolerance. We should expose such people for what they are, bigots.

If you are a nonbeliever and are present when believers are praying, don't pray. But out of respect and courtesy for them as human beings, do not be rude or make ugly remarks about them. Respect people as people, even if they practice a different religion. And respect their religion.

Mr. Reese concluded this column by saying,

I am fed up with seeing religious people browbeaten and insulted by bullies packing lawyers. We have too many mean-spirited tails trying to wag our dog in this country. It may be time to bob some tails.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a great column by Charley Reese, and I include the column for the RECORD:

RESPECT PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF RELIGION  
(By Charlie Reese)

MARCH 30.—Want to know the definition of a stone-cold bigot?

It's anybody who is "offended" by the sight and sound of someone practicing, expressing or proclaiming his religious faith.

Such people are not only bigots, they are the south end of a horse traveling north. Their intolerance is exceeded only by their ignorance of the Constitution.

The first amendment forbids the establishment of an official church or religion. Period. Nothing else. To establish an official church or religion would require legislation so designating it, and taxes and appropriations to subsidize it. That's all Thomas Jefferson meant when he said there was a wall of separation between church and state.

You would have to be an idiot to conclude otherwise because the same people who wrote and passed the First Amendment also provided for tax-paid chaplains to pray in Congress. The problem the founders of the country dealt with is nonexistent today in America. It was the common practice of governments in their day to adopt a church and tax everyone to subsidize it. The practice had been brought from Europe to the colonies.

But when a private individual or a public official prays in a school or any other public place, he is not establishing an official church. For someone to say that the mere

sight of a Christian proclaiming his faith in a public place is "offensive" is to indict himself as a vicious bigot and an inconsiderate, self-centered boor. These boors apparently have no conception of civility and respect for others. They act as if religious faith were an infectious disease.

One of the most touching sights I saw in the Middle East was a poor man, a Muslim, in shabby clothes, kneeling on a newspaper (the only prayer rug he could afford) of the tarmac of the airport in Amman, Jordan, and saying his evening prayers. His example of simple faith in his God touched my heart.

He was as oblivious to the crowd of people and soldiers as he was to the cold wind and hard tarmac. He had a beautiful expression on his grizzled face. Clearly, there was man communing with a God he loved, and God must surely love such a man.

Truthfully, I cannot conceive how any decent human being could say that such a sight is "offensive." People who find other people's religion offensive are demonstrating their hatred, not their interest in liberty.

The only way a free society can work is for everyone to respect everyone else. There is no respect when someone says, "Your religion is offensive to me, so keep it out of my sight." That is hate speech. Nor is it being disrespectful to practice your own religion or to pray as your particular religion teaches you to pray.

I don't know about you, but I've had a bel-lyful of rude, self-centered people. It's time to teach some people in this country some simple manners.

Good manners are based on reciprocity. Respect for respect. Tolerance for tolerance. There are some people who use Orwellian doublespeak and practice bigotry while proclaiming their support for tolerance. We should expose such people for what they are—bigots.

If you are a nonbeliever and are present when believers are praying, don't pray. But out of respect and courtesy for them as human beings, don't be rude or make ugly remarks about them. Respect people, as people, even if they practice a different religion. And respect their religion.

I'm fed up with seeing religious people browbeaten and insulted by bullies packing lawyers. We have too many mean-spirited tails trying to wag our dog in this country. It may be time to bob some tails.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, due to official business in my district, I was unavoidably absent on Tuesday, May 5, and Wednesday, May 6, and, as a result, missed rollcall votes 125–135.

Had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall 122, yes on rollcall 123, yes on rollcall 124, yes on rollcall 125, yes on rollcall 126, no on rollcall 127, no on rollcall 128, yes on rollcall 129, yes on rollcall 130, yes on rollcall 131, yes on rollcall 132, no on rollcall 133, no on rollcall 134, and finally, yes on rollcall 135.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I take this 5 minutes to further clarify some of the discussions that we had a moment ago concerning the question of campaign finance reform.

I want to make it very clear for those who are negotiating on what the rule shall look like and how we shall proceed what the Blue Dog Coalition suggested in the discharge petition that was filed, that was getting very close to having the required number of votes in which we could have had a free and open debate and which we have now been promised that we will have a clean and open debate.

There are some general principles allowing clean up-or-down votes on all major campaign finance plans. The freshman bill, the Shays-Meehan bill, and the Doolittle bill, and any alternatives the leadership might come up with on either side of the aisle and wishes to offer as substitutes at the beginning of the amendment process, this is key to the discharge petition that we filed. It is exactly the same discharge petition that was used to successfully bring the balanced budget amendment up in 1992. It is a very fair process if it is allowed to proceed in this manner.

All major proposals deserve a vote. The freshmen, bipartisanship, have worked awfully hard; and they worked in an environment in which they believed that there was not going to be campaign finance reform unless there was a compromise reached, and they reached that compromise internally. They worked awfully hard. They deserve to have a chance to have their idea voted upon as they wish it to be voted upon, not as the leadership or any other individual wishes. The same is true with the Shays-Meehan; it deserves to be voted upon on its merits.

And then we use what is called the queen-of-the-Hill rule. Let the freshman bill be voted upon. If it gets the majority vote, it becomes the base bill. Then let us vote on Shays-Meehan. If it gets a majority vote and more votes than the freshman bill, it becomes the base bill; whichever one gets the most votes, as ascertained by a majority on both sides, becomes the base bill. And then allow the perfecting amendments to be offered. Let any one of the 435 of us who have an idea that they believe is important to the campaign issues before us be offered.

I have one interest, one major interest, that I want to see addressed. It is the soft money question. A lot of people do not know what we are talking about by "soft money." But to me it means unlimited amounts of money given by individuals or corporations for which there is no real reporting therein.

I am a great believer in the first amendment, and I have been chagrined to be attacked by many of my so-called